Without a Smartphone

I am a person who very quickly accepts new technology and also tries it out. So I already had my own mobile phone in the 90'. A mobile phone was incredibly expensive, had few functions and also no real use among young people. You just had one and it was a status symbol. Initially, SMS was offered free of charge by the network providers, which was later discontinued due to the economic potential [1]. Until then, young people had used this service extensively, just because the Internet was still very expensive. Then came the Futurephones and finally the Smartphones. Of course I also bought some. It fitted to all my social media accounts and I used a lot of apps to make my everyday life easier.

Unfortunately the idea with the social web turned out to be a bad one and so I deleted Facebook, Youtube, Twitter and co a few years ago. This all happened before it got really bad with all the privacy scandals, the fake news wave or the hate mobs raging through the social media like marauding orc hordes. I also started to find it really annoying that every *Facebook Friend* wanted to chat with me out of boredom. I really don't like to chat and only in very rare cases, if at all two or three times a year in a certain IRC channel. Also the always needed attention for apps became really exhausting. Here an update (Android), here a new message (Facebook) or here a new follower request (Twitter). At some point I noticed that most of the time I just stared at my smartphone and talked less and less with people in reality. My body was at parties, but my head was reading some Internet articles. Why talk to people when they could send me a message on FB?

At some point I became more interested in data protection and researched which app calls home and which data is tapped. With each further article I became more and more aware that I was milked like a cow and am only a product. A frightening thought, which restricts my personal freedom to uninfluenced self-development. I was manipulated, my thoughts were twisted, my political views were swirled and again and again I had to ask myself the question, what corresponded at all still to the truth. Every provider, every click bait journalist just wanted to sell me his story. It wasn't about enlightenment anymore, but about the tough business in which only money counts. Advertising adapted to my search process and wanted to sell me products that I didn't want to buy and even ad blockers didn't bring a real solution, because there was a constant upgrade between the ad business and the blockers. Just like with black hat's and the police.

Of course, after some time politicians came up with the idea of what you can do with your smartphone. Bank details, my tickets for trains, paying for my shopping in the supermarket with NFC and maybe even my whole health record. That these people don't think about the possible consequences can be seen in the current data protection scandal. Instead of producing less data, they would rather set up a cyber police force. What a stupid idea. Old white men want to decide what to do with my smartphone. It's all about surveillance and producing more data to be stored in more databases. After industry, politics now also wants to use this valuable resource. I am to be further exploited like a slave. I don't want to hang like a junkie on a smartphone needle just waiting for the next fake news info push. I don't want everyone to know exactly when I did what, how and where. I want my private sphere back, because I no longer trust industry and politics. With the politicians in Germany I have no sympathy, now they have to swallow the bitter medicine which the German citizens have to take the whole time.

I started the self-experiment and put my smartphone in a drawer. At some point the battery was empty and I had forgotten it faster than I had expected. I was still at parties or dates because I didn't have a smartphone, but for a few minutes most people could understand why I decided against it. I also realized how difficult it is for most people to get by without a smartphone. Since I grew up *before* this hardware, it seems to be easier for me. Maybe I just thought about it more. In any case, the device then lay in the locked drawer for a year or two and slowly set dust on. I turned it on once, but nothing had changed. It produced immediately again the negative feelings which I did not want to have. Yesterday I stowed it in the hardware cabinet, with the things that will soon be brought to the basement anyway. A broken toy Drone from China, a old Fitbit bracelet or the handheld radio without antenna and lots of another junk. Some things might find a new home in another hacking project, the smartphone rather not. The components are much too small and I have enough displays. I could use it for ebooks, but I would have to install an app first and I don't really want to do that. I'm not going to buy a smartphone anymore and that's another practical advantage. What I don't have can't be monitored and geolocated by secret services or criminals.

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The upper part of the text was a few months ago and a lot has changed in the meantime. My family had some problems when I could not be reached by phone. I could understand that, because if someone from my family dies and I am in Helsinki at the weekend, I want to know about it at the hotel in the evening at the latest. So I switched on my smartphone again and after a few weeks the typical behaviour patterns developed again. So, for example, I created a Twitter account again, although I don't need it for my work and targeting has no noteworthy relevance. Also the whole hate, the outrage and the whole dramatizing of current events disgusts me. Social media is dead. By the way, I tried some smartphone games, but they all suck 100% and just want to get the money out of my pocket. Apparently I also installed a Trojan from a free game that had latched into my connections. Thanks to Wireshark I noticed that, but I couldn't delete the Trojan without resetting the whole smartphone to the factory settings. This all takes time and nerves, so I had two problems.

How can I call in an emergency (accident, death, delay, etc.) and do not have all the negative features of a smartphone (digital depression, continuous interruptions, Trojans, espionage, advertising, etc.)? I bought a very simple mobile phone in a shop, which can make phone calls and write text messages and nothing else. I had to hack my SIM card. No internet, no apps, no companies that constantly spy on me what I'm reading, like or what kind of music I'm listening to. The mobile phone can radio and if I insert a 32Gb card I can also listen to MP3s. Without advertising and another interruptions. Photos and videos can also be recorded. In a ridiculous resolution of 128 x 160 pixels with 45 ppi. Wonderful. You can't do anything with it and that's exactly what I wanted. There is not a single game on this mobile phone and so it is the most boring technical device I have ever owned. So I will only use it for making phone calls and that was my goal. I can be reached, but I don't get distracted. I can then finally read a real book on the way or look at the landscape, talk to people or draw a little. All the activities I haven't done since I had a smartphone. I will clean and sell the smartphone again. If I'm lucky someone will buy another Huawei P8 (Lite) because they haven't read any news.